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ABSTRACT

Recently, school-community relationships have gained popularity as a way to increase resources for schools. This paper presents results of a case study that examined the interorganizational relationship between a public school and a community-based program. Specifically, the study explored the elements involved in the implementation and operational phases of Believe in Me, a community-based program in a public school. The school, Rogers Elementary, is located in a large urban school district in central Texas. The program uses dance as a tool for leadership and character development. Data were derived from interviews with key stakeholders from both organizations, observation, and content analysis of documents. Key to a successful interorganizational relationship (IOR) is a focus on common goals and, more specifically, goals that address the needs of constituents. Other program strengths included the development and recognition of mutual goals and authority. The paper also describes the changes that must occur in stakeholder roles (principals, teachers, and parents) for program success. Steps in the process include the following: determine interest; conduct schoolwide orientations; specify roles and responsibilities; develop linking agents; and find the right people for the job. Three tables are included. (Contains 42 references.) (LMI)

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The Interorganizational Relationship Between A Community-Based Program and A Public School

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THE INTERORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAM AND A PUBLIC SCHOOL.

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There is a great need to bring new meaning to integration in the public school setting, to generate interest in developing collaboration among schools, communities and social services. According to Mizrahi and Morrison (1993), "Whether in the public or private sector, neighbor'.ood or national level, developing interorganizational relationships and structures is essential for expanding or restructuring programs or policies" (p. 7).

The idea of forming relationships between schools and the community is not new. However, a renewed interest has emerged in our effort to better serve students' needs in today's schools. Fiske (1991) stated "New relationships between schools and the surrounding environment have been seriously under way since the mid 1960s, when Congress launched Head Start and other enrichment programs for disadvantaged children" (p. 205). Recently, school-community relationships have gained popularity as a way to increase resources for schools (Hayes, Lipoff, & Danegger, 1995; Miller & O'Shea, 1994; Rioux & Berla, 1993; Rutherford & Billig, 1995; The White House, 1994). Bigelow (1987) stated,

> School-community collaboration is on the rise around the country, reflecting increasing interest in opening school doors to a wealth of community resources. More and more community groups, from social service agencies to private foundations, are participating in the common responsibility of providing and supporting education. . . . rallying the resources of the community around improving education and related student services. (p. 47)

As stated previously, the idea of forming programs between schools and the community is not a new one, but the question as to whether a program is producing the desired results needs to be addressed. Cuban (1988) made some cautionary statements regarding two criticisms of past reforms [or programs]: (a) historically, they have had a tendency to be short-lived or superficial, and (b) they have failed to alter the curricula, instruction, roles of either students or teachers, or school goals. Bruner (1991) provided another reason for program ineffectiveness: "most services are crisis oriented -- designed to address problems that have already occurred rather than to offer supports of various kinds to prevent difficulties from developing in the first place" (pp. 6-7). Another criticism of collaborative programs has been that they are not directed at the school's core values and beliefs and thus have little impact on students and teachers.

What makes a community-based program work? McLaughlin, Irby, and Langman (1994) stated,

> Our research shows that a variety of neighborhood-based programs work as long as there is an interaction between the program and its youth that results in those youths treating the program as a personal resource and a bridge to a hopeful future.
> (p. 5)

This interaction between the program and the youths served is tied to a feeling of membership which is a criterion of effective change supported by Wehlage et al. (1992). They claimed, "an essential condition upon which to build academic success is for students to feel that they are members of the school community" (p. 85).

One way to enhance this feeling of membership is to involve parents and family members with other community members. Studies have shown a positive correlation between family-school collaboration and gains in student achievement. Anne T. Henderson, an associate with the National Committee for Citizens in Education, cited 49 studies showing a correlation between family-school collaboration and gains in student achievement. Students in schools that maintain frequent contact with their communities outperform those in other schools, and students who are failing in school, improve dramatically when parents are called in to assist (Fiske, 1991, p. 232).

Forming collaborations appears to be an easy solution for building support in the community, however, this process does pose a challenge for schools. Chavis, Florin, and Felix (1993), described the challenge for schools attempting to develop or strengthen community participation as a central mechanism for tackling entrenched social problems and promoting social change. The challenge involves developing and maintaining collaborative community-based organizations because they often are "vulnerable to rapid decline or dissolution." The authors noted that, "we know relatively little about what can be done to help voluntary community organizations survive and become more effective" (p. 42).

Reported here are the results of a case study to examine the interorganizational relationship between a public school and a community-based program. Specifically, this study explored the elements involved in the implementational and operational phases of Believe in Me, a community-based program operating in a public school.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Educational institutions today are facing a plethora of challenges that cannot be met without the resources and support of other institutions and programs (Chavkin, 1993; Crowson & Boyd, 1992; Gordon, 1995; Gray, 1989; Holtzman, 1995; Kagan, Rivera, and Parker, 1990; Rigsby, 1995; Rioux & Berla, 1993). Fertman (1993) noted:

> Changing family structures, economic pressures, political forces, and fragmented human service systems have made the lives of children and adolescents more hectic and stressful than ever. Given the increasing complexity of students' lives, collaboration to address their social, emotional, and health needs makes sense. (p. 32)

Although research has supported the idea of forming partnerships between schools and outside agencies, the development process for such a relationship is not always easy because of differing organizational cultures. Fertman (1993) described a number of differences between schools and community agencies, including [organizational] structures, legal mandates, and finances, as well as their individual cultures. These differences may appear to be insurmountable, but there are some established relationships that do "serve as major sources of support and energy for a range of services" (Fertman, 1993, p. 32).

These partnerships, or relationships, are not solely cooperative or collaborative in nature but are varied and are included in the larger context of interorganizational relationships (IORs), which, as defined by Intriligator (1986), are "newly created organizations that are formed voluntarily by single organizations that have a common goal to achieve or a defined interdependency that leads to formal collaboration" (p. 5).

The literature highlights several benefits associated with interorganizational benefits, but there are also some challenging problems which can reduce the success of these. According to Griesel (1992), there are problems associated with the apparent overuse of the term collaboration in particular, a lack of a clear definition that distinguishes it from similar terms such as cooperation, coordination, team effort, partnerships, alliances, consortiums, etc. Fertman (1993) maintained that agency and school collaboration is in fact a continuum of relationships that supports mutual needs, with the most important factor being the development of one common thread -- the goal of serving and supporting children and adolescents.

In studying interorganizational relationships, researchers recently have focused on the area of community-based organizations (Hayes, Lipoff, & Danegger, 1995; Miller & O'Shea, 1994; Rioux & Berla, 1993; Rutherford & Billig, 1995; The White House, 1994). Relationships among families, schools, and communities are being recognized and strengthened through the development of such organizations. Kilbourne, Decker, and Romney (1994) stressed the importance of these relationships:

> Family and community are the two pillars of public education as it has evolved in the United States. From families and communities, public schooling derived its mission, its strength, and its character. Families, communities, and schools have over the years formed a partnership, resembling at its best a reciprocal giving-getting compact. Schooling's goal is to prepare our children to assume their places in our communities as productive workers and responsible citizens, transmitting the cultural values that undergird our family structure and unify our society. In turn, families and communities have supplied the financial, moral, and practical support that schools rely on to fulfill their mission.

> Community-based education initiatives [organizations, programs] are conscious responses to perceived inadequacies in the way we educate our youth. They are as varied as our nation's cities and towns, ranging from relatively unstructured commitments to provide specific services or products to a local school, to full-blown "alliances" that seek to involve major segments of a community in cooperative efforts to improve educational opportunity. All of these initiatives reflect a conscious effort to increase cooperation between those community members who have a stake in children's education and the school system mandated by law to educate those children. The success of these local initiatives is likely to be critical in determining whether, and to what degree, the partnership among family, community, and schools can be reforged. (pp. 9-10)

Community involvement is not only for schools' children but also a powerful resource for families and schools. In recognizing the contributions of community involvement, J. Gardner (1991) stated:

> A community has the power to motivate its members to exceptional performance. It can set standards of expectation for the individual and provide the climate in which great things happen. It can pull extraordinary performances out of its members. The community can tap levels of emotion and motivation that often remain dormant. (p. 5)

One example of such a relationship between schools and the community is the Comer School Development Program created by Yale Medical School's James Comer, who is also a staff member of the university's Child Study Center. Comer (1988) stressed that

what so many of today's children lack is a sense of community that results from contact with a variety of adults who can act as legitimate authority figures. He argued that, without this sense of community, our children today are under constant stress -- with information but without models or tools to know how to act. Comer's strategy was to discern avenues to bolster the underdeveloped social and psychological needs of disadvantaged students as a precondition to effective academic training.

Another example is the Corporate Community School of Chicago, a tuition-free private school created on the city's devastated west side in August 1989. This year-round school acts as a "hub" -- the center of a network of social agencies. Community school staff act as family advocates in an attempt to make use of existing resources in the community.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation's New Futures Initiative, developed to increase the life chances of disadvantaged youth, is another example of a program created to better serve at-risk students. Wehlage, Smith, and Lipman (1992) described the reason for the program as follows: ". . . too many young people were failing -- failing to acquire the skills and knowledge that would allow them to meet the challenges of being good workers, citizens, and parents in the 21st century" (p. 55). They noted that this program was "designed to develop new institutional strategies and resources for a variety of organizations that serve young people at risk of various forms of failure" (p. 55).

A successful partnership or collaboration among schools, families, and communities achieves a common goal -- children's education. When parents and communities get involved, children do better in schools and they go to better schools (A. Henderson, 1987; Fiske, 1991; Kagan, 1984). According to a report from the Texas

Education Agency (1989), "When parents and community members support schools, students stay in school." (p. 1)

Community-based initiatives or programs have a common characteristic in that they focus on issues specific to the needs of the local community (McLaughlin & Irby, 1994). A report from the U.S. General Accounting Office (1995) stated, "They [programs in this report] are considered community-based because they focus on a specific geographic area and involve the residents in planning and implementing the effort. Comprehensive community-based efforts have often begun within a community in response to neighborhood conditions rather than in response to a federal program -- and are operated by local non-profit organizations" (p. 12). Stone (1993) concurred: "the best form and organization for a collaborative must be derived from local purposes. It will depend on resources and other factors that are unique to each locality" (p. 4)

It is important to note that the focus of these initiatives is on the specific needs of a community rather than providing a "cure-all" for all communities. Another focus is the specific needs of individual children within a community. Though some researchers have already concluded that community-based initiatives have resulted in positive outcomes for children, families, and communities (Cates, 1986; O'Callaghan, 1993; The White House, 1994), creating these initiatives can be problematic.

According to Fertman (1993), "Establishing partnerships between schools and community agencies is not always easy -- there are important differences between the two that can impede cooperation" (p. 32). One important difference is that schools are well-established, formal community institutions, whereas most community agencies, although important: (a) are not mandated by government, (b) provide services that are intangible and hard to measure, (c) depend on grants and donors, (d) must be continuously innovative

with limited resources, and (e) have distinct differences in their cultures from those of schools. Another problem, according to Intriligator (1986), is that how to structure and build these relationships is still a confusing process.

One reason for these problems may stem from the fact that there are many forms of IORs, with varied definitions and structures, which may contribute to making the process of establishing an interorganizational relationship confusing. Despite these differences and problems, community-based programs have been developed and implemented in connection to schools mostly because of their focus on meeting local needs. As stated in the White House report (1994), a majority of these programs "arose from community concerns" [with the] most successful programs hav[ing] "deep roots in the community" [and] "carefully integrated with specific local community needs and strengths" (p. 4).

Community members have an opportunity to have a positive impact on children and families in need. Edwards and Jones-Young (1992) summed it up best when they stated,

> A child lives in many worlds. Home, family, school, neighborhood, and society shape the contours of childhood and adolescence. Action in one sphere ripples through the others. For many children today, those kinds of communities and the ready support of nearby relatives and friends have vanished. (pp. 72-74)

Community-based initiatives are one way to establish this needed system of support. According to Rioux and Berla (1993), "Increasingly, local leadership is coming to realize that building a network of support for children through and around the public schools is central to the well-being of the entire community" (p. xi). And for this to

happen, "schoolpeople need to forge alliances with an array of community organizations and agencies" (Edwards & Jones-Young, 1992, p. 78).

Although a range of studies on interorganizational relationships exists, one major area has been overlooked, primarily in the area of case studies. Hord (1985) stated, "Research is needed that undertakes comparative studies of the various ways of interrelating: cooperation, coordination, and collaboration, and so on. Perhaps we would learn the requirements of each method, the limitations, and the effectiveness of each type under specific circumstances" (p. 25).

This research could be undertaken through the use of case studies illustrating working models of interorganizational relationships in various forms. Hord (1985) stated that the use of such models would

> provide illumination about the initial and ongoing requirements of collaboration [which] could be informative to those who must make decisions about organizational behavior. Individuals who refer to such models would become more aware of the array of the requirements of collaboration. They may also learn that leadership roles and communication channels in the collaborative process necessitate special accommodations. Examination of experience-based models makes predetermined information on the rewards of collaboration available to the architects of the policy. (p. 21)

Interorganizational relationships including coordination, cooperation, and collaboration/partnerships can mean different things for different people. The definitions for these various IOR terms may be confusing because they vary from source to source.

Thus, for the purpose of this study they can be distinguished in the following way: *Coordination* is an informal agreement between two or more organizations to operate independently but to maximize efficiency, reduce harmful competition and coordinate each others activities so there is no interference among each organizations operations in obtaining their goals; *Cooperation* is a more formal agreement between two or more organizations to make a reciprocal commitment on some specific organizational activity to achieve a mutual benefit. Each partners' responsibilities and roles are outlined and the expected outcomes are agreed upon; and *Collaboration* is more of a long-term organizational commitment between two or more institutions to form a new structure with a commonly shared vision and developed goals and objectives which are accomplished through consensus, shared decision-making, and new roles and relationships for the various stakeholders.

METHOD

The research strategy for this study was an exploratory case study focusing on the interorganizational relationship of a community-based program and a public school. The Believe in Me program selected for this study, as described by its Director, is an exercise in leadership and character development that uses dance as a tool to the habits of perseverance, total concentration, attention to detail, and the joy of hard work. The goal of this program is to give its participants (fourth and fifth grade children): increased self-confidence, realization that self-discipline brings rewards, appreciation for the diversity of our culture, a respect for and an understanding of hard work, and an awareness of the importance of family. Special emphasis was placed upon the implementational and operational processes of the program. The public school chosen for this case study, Rogers Elementary, is located in a large urban school district in central Texas. It is a neighborhood school where only 65 of the 623 students use district transportation.

According to 1994-1995 district figures, 86.5% of the student population was categorized low-income and participated in the district free/reduced lunch program. The same district report listed the student population as predominantly African American (76%), with 21% Hispanic and the remaining 3% of the student population Anglo/Other. Pertinent knowledge and information for this study was gathered through the collaboration of various stakeholders in the Believe in Me program and Rogers Elementary School and the implementation of various aspects of naturalistic inquiry (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, and Allen, 1993). The questions addressed were:

1. What was involved in the interorganizational relationship throughout the implementation phase of a community-based program in this public school?

2. What was involved in the interorganizational relationship throughout the operational phase of a community-based program in this public school?

3. What is the nature of the interorganizational relationship between the Believe in Me program and the public school?

Participants

Because this study focused on the implementational and operational processes of the Believe in Me program, one elementary school (Rogers Elementary) that had been in the program since its inception (Fall 1991) was selected. Another reason for selecting Rogers Elementary was that staff members who had been involved with the program since the beginning of its implementation. These staff members included fourth and fifth grade teachers, former and present in-school coordinators, and the assistant principal. Further, the Believe in Me program was selected for this study because it met the community-based

program criteria established by the researcher: The program (a) existed outside of the school district organization with its own board of directors and staff; (b) had a nonprofit status; and (c) was solely founded by a member of the community (the Director) who, at the time of development, had no ties to the district or any other education or business entity.

Instrumentation

For qualitative studies, the individual researcher is the predominant instrument for generating data. According to Erlandson et al. (1993), "The human instrument is a wonderful data-processing organism. It is more sensitive to various shades of meaning and more able to appropriately respond to them than the most elaborate nonhuman instrument that might be imagined" (p. 107). It should be noted, however, that a number of characteristics and skills are required of the researcher to be successful in conducting a qualitative study. These were developed by conducting a pilot study and by establishing a good relationship with a key stakeholder, the Director of the Believe in Me program. This relationship created a hospitable treatment from informants throughout the inquiry and eased the identification of informants willing to comment on draft copies of the report, as suggested by Stake (1995).

Portions of Stake's (1995) case study protocol were used as a guide to increase the reliability of the case study and to use as a guide in carrying out the case study. These seven protocol elements included: (1) anticipation, (2) first visit, (3) further preparation for observation, (4) further development for conceptualization, (5) gather/validate data, (6) analysis of data, and (7) providing audience opportunity for understanding. A core set of questions was created for each interview because, according to Stake (1995), "too much commitment in advance is problematic" (p. 28). These core questions covered some

background information on the informants, their definition of the Believe in Me program, and specific areas related to the research goals of this study. Other questions evolved from individual respondent's replies to the core questions and sometimes to clarify (a) what they said or what another respondent might have contributed, (b) observations, or (c) analyzed documents. An effort was made during the interview process, as suggested by Stake (1995), to try and "preserve the multiple realities, the different and even contradictory views of what is happening" (p. 12). All interviews were taperecorded and most were transcribed, usually within a day.

Additionally, a qualitative field study was conducted. In the "search for both accuracy and alternative explanations" (Stake, 1995, p. 107), triangulation was used in the form of semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analyses. Data analysis was a two-step inductive procedure of unitizing and categorizing data during (but mostly after) the collection of these data. When writing the case report, the following recommendations made by Stake (1995), were followed; "[the] best story needs to be found. It is an effective author who tells what is needed and leaves the rest to the reader" (p. 121).

Field Procedures

The research approach was an explorative case study focusing on those elements involved in the implementational and operational phases of a community-based program operating in a public school. This approach involved the use of initial interviews with key stakeholders from both organizations, which formed a purposive sample to identify others to be interviewed, as well as observations of the program and content data analysis of documents related to this study. Twenty-six interviews were conducted throughout the study using an interview protocol developed in a previous pilot study. Field notes of

personal observations (e.g., student practice sessions and a parent meeting) and a review of documents (e.g., various published descriptions of the Believe in Me program, the school contract, schedules and programs from past performances) from the school and the Believe in Me program also were sources for data. From the raw data generated in these procedures, categories and patterns emerged that shaped the case study reports and the final discussion and analyses. Trustworthiness was accomplished in this study by following the criteria for establishing transferability, credibility, and dependability. Peer-debriefing and member checks were used to strengthen the trustworthiness of the study, along with triangulation of data through multiple informant perspectives.

FINDINGS

Believe in Me's implementation into the schools, along with the program's operation during its first four seasons (January 1992 to Summer 1995) is presented in this section along with a focus on the interorganizational relationship formed between the Believe in Me program and Rogers Elementary school during the first four seasons of the program. Each of the parts of this section (implementation phase, operational phase, and the interorganizational relationship) contain a matrix after the summary which highlights the key points of the section and describes the roles and responsibilities of the Believe in Me program compared to Rogers Elementary School.

The Interorganizational Relationship Throughout The Implementation Phase Of A Community-Based Program In a Public School

The implementational phase began once the basic idea for the Believe in Me program was developed into an organizational entity. This implementation process included the selection and orientation of schools that would participate in Believe in Me, the

selection of the in-school coordinator (ISC) and the audition process for selecting the children. This phase ended on the first day of practice for the children.

The themes of interest, involvement, support, and commitment are woven throughout the implementation process of the Believe in Me program. In the context of the six founding schools, a strong element of the implementation process was the interest, involvement, and commitment of one key stakeholder in the school setting -- the principal. The principal was responsible for introducing the Believe in Me program to the school in such a way that the staff would accept and support it. In the specific case of Rogers Elementary, the Principal had a driving commitment to bring this program to her school and to do what she could to keep it a part of her school. This commitment was transferred to other staff who then contributed their time and efforts to working with the program.

During the program's initial season, another important element in the implementational phase was the fact that Believe in Me had been modeled after an existing program (with Jacques d'Amboise's National Dance Institute) providing a proven history. This was used to introduce the program to the principals of the first group of participating schools and to gain their interest and support. The strengths identified in d'Amboise's program were then used to develop the Believe in Me model, thereby providing a strong foundation from which to build this community-based program.

After the first season, Believe in Me broadened its implementation process for adding new schools to the program. The Director (and her staff) still looked at the principal, but now also focused on four specific characteristics she thought the principal should have. These characteristics included: (1) are open to innovative programs, (2) are willing to give parents access to schools, (3) develop real efforts to involve the community, and (4) are willing to "buck the system" and have more responsibility for success of their

school. She also looked at the makeup of the school and developed orientations involving all school staff for the purpose of gaining the support of, involvement in, and commitment from the whole school.

The themes of involvement and commitment continued after the first season, when Believe in Me introduced contracts for schools to sign after they were selected. These contracts listed specific responsibilities of the school and of the program staff. One of the more crucial responsibilities on the school's part was the selection of the in-school coordinator (ISC) by the principal. The ISC is a parent, staff member, or teacher who is in the practice room at all times when the children are being taught. This person would also act as a linking agent between the program staff and the school as a way to establish and strengthen communication between these two organizations.

The last step in the implementation phase was the selection of the students, which was done in the form of auditions. The school and the Believe in Me program staff shared responsibilities for deciding upon a group of students who would be a fair representation of the entire school population. What Believe in Me staff were looking for when selecting the children was *skill and will* with a focus on identifying those children who would succeed in meeting the program's high expectations -- who had the desire. Each child began on an equal footing by possessing a natural energy, but it was those who exhibited the desire to participate in the program who were selected during the auditions. A summary of the implementation process is presented in table 1.

Table 1. Implementation Phase

Implementation Phase Elements	Believe in Me	Rogers Elementary
Selection of Schools	generate school/community interest school-wide orientations prior to a school's commitment annual orientations sign contract	Principals with certain characteristics school-wide support for the program staff participation / involvement sign contract
Selection of ISC	ongoing communication on-site visits	take on linking agent responsibilities perform required tasks
Selection of Students	conduct auditions look for skill and will result in cross-representation of school	select classrooms prepare students prepare classroom teachers to work with program schedule

The Operational Phase Of A Community-Based Program In This Public School

This study's investigation of the operational phase began with the first day of practice at Rogers Elementary School (January 1992) and continued through the summer of 1995. The operational phase of the Believe in Me program could be characterized as one of change, transition, independence, and even rebellion. At the beginning of this period, d'Amboise and the National Dance Institute were directing the Believe in Me program while at the same time training the staff on how to develop and run their own organization. By the end of this period, four years later, the Believe in Me staff was in complete control and had just finished their first self-created and -developed year-end production, called *Faces of Courage* (up to this point, Believe in Me had relied on d'Amboise's productions).

During the operational phase, a number of themes were identified. They include: staffing (both dance and administrative), development of community support, program

growth and expansion, evaluations (both informal and formal), and ongoing operations. These themes are presented in more detail in the next section.

Staffing the Believe in Me program was an ongoing process throughout most of this study with the greatest transition of dance staff occurring in the first 2 years. Obtaining a qualified "quality" staff was accomplished through offering competitive salaries and providing ongoing workshops and evaluations to enhance development. The key to finding the "right people," however, was locating those individuals who had natural energy, patience, and good group-management techniques. For all staff, it was a matter of identifying those persons who were not in it for themselves but (as the Director stated) "whose hearts are in it."

The Director decided that Believe in Me could not "go it alone" and survive without the *support of the community*. One of the largest sources of support came in the form of a partnership with the local university. This partnership not only offered the program terrific exposure to and visibility in the community at large, it also provided other benefits such as in-kind contributions and access to potentially productive board members. Community support in the form of motivation was also generated through supplying videotapes of Believe in Me performances to community groups or having community members see actual performances such as weekly practices at a Believe in Me school, rehearsals, end-of-the-year productions, and appearances at community functions (conventions, conferences, and special events).

Program growth and expansion were accomplished in a number of ways. An attempt was made to develop a transferable model of the Believe in Me program to introduce to and implement in other cities in this region of the country. Due to a number of constraints (mostly with staffing issues), and the fact that the Believe in Me staff was not

prepared for this type of expansion, a transferable model was still at the working stage at the time of this writing. Growth in various program components was accomplished, including the addition of special dance groups called SWAT and Celebration teams, a summer institute, the beginning stages of a whole-grade program piloted in two schools, and the development of a character education component throughout the Believe in Me program. Future program growth was being discussed in the form of developing a performance-based Believe in Me elementary school or a process-pedagogy model of staff development so that school staff could carry on the program without Believe in Me staff (this would allow the time required for Believe in Me staff to offer the program to new schools).

Most *evaluations* were informal in content and produced a number of results. These included lessons learned about the Believe in Me children, parents, school principals and in-school coordinators, development of school-wide support, the selection of Believe in Me students, program flexibility, and community performances. Formal evaluations became more important to the program because they are a requirement for most grant applications. The school district had one evaluation program that the Director found to be too "statistical" and not providing the type of information she believed was important, that is, data related to the changing behavior of Believe in Me students. An assessment form for obtaining this type of information had been developed, with the results to be provided after this study was completed (fall 1995 or spring 1996).

The last section of the operational phase was *ongoing operations*, during which the Believe in Me program split away from the National Dance Institute and became its own entity. As a result, the Believe in Me program developed and produced its own end-of-the-year production in spring 1995 called Faces of Courage. Other changes in the program during the operational phase included improvements made to the board of directors (with

the selection of a new board president who had developed different approaches to meeting the program's needs) and an evolving role for the Director (that of one in which she was solely responsible for Believe in Me's future to one where she is more of an advocate -- focused more intently on maintaining program quality and high expectations for achieving its goals). A summary of the operational process is presented in table 2.

Table 2. Operational Phase

Operational Phase Elements	Believe in Me	Rogers Elementary
Dance Staff	finding the "right" people with certain innate characteristics ongoing staff development and offer competitive benefits	provide constructive feedback for staff evaluations enable program staff to become one of the school staff
Administrative Staff	same as above and ongoing communication with school staff	same as above and ongoing communication with program staff
Develop Community Support	provide seats on board and student performances in the community partnerships with other organizations that support the program motivation through visibility factor with seeing performances	school representation in program's board meetings enable school group to perform in the community and support of partnerships allow community members to visit practice sessions and school performances
Program Growth and Expansion	develop a transferable model develop special dance groups and a summer institute piloted whole-grade programs character education component continuous planning for future growth opportunities	contribute suggestions to ideas for program growth and assist in communicating to families about student opportunities to participate in community programs volunteer school for new program ideas and assist program staff to develop ways to incorporate program themes into school curriculum
Informal Evaluation	use staff observations of the children and reactions from staff and children after a performance experiences with various schools and school staff program flexibility to meet students'/schools' changing needs	provide opportunities for (1) children to perform in the community and (2) parents to become involved supportive principal and school staff and selection of an effective ISC communicate needs to program staff
Formal Evaluation	district statistical program to determine retention and dropout rates of at-risk students and develop evaluation tool to determine behavior changes in students in program	provide school and student data as needed
Ongoing Operations	becoming its own entity continued improvements to board of directors and changing role of the Director/founder	provide ongoing assessment of the program and participate in decision making processes regarding program developments

The Nature Of The Interorganizational Relationship Between The Believe In Me Program And The Public School

At the first meeting with Believe in Me staff, the schools were asked to make a commitment to the program by: (a) giving the group a room with a floor -- no carpet, (b) providing a piano, (c) bussing the children where they needed to be for performances, (d) taking responsibility for getting the children there, and (e) providing a parent, staff member, or teacher to be the ISC -- someone who would be in the practice room at all times when the children were being taught. Since the third season, another requirement has been to contribute $5,000 toward program operations. All of this was explained during the orientation program with the school staff. What Believe in Me was requesting was not only support, but total school commitment to the program to help ensure its success. At the same time, Believe in Me was also making a commitment: to provide "x" number of classes at a specific time and date that would lead to the school's participation in the end-of-the-year production.

This commitment between, for example, Rogers Elementary School and Believe in Me, was the foundation from which the interorganizational relationship was built.

While some researchers suggest that interorganizational relationships (IORs) are on a hierarchy, with cooperation as the base, coordination in the middle, and collaboration as the primary level (Kagan, 1991), others believe there is more of a continuum from cooperation to collaboration and that organizations can move through the continuum as needed (Fertman, 1993). This study's findings illustrate that Rogers Elementary School and the Believe in Me organization had met the criteria established in this study's definition for a collaborative relationship based on Mattessich & Monsey (1992) theoretical framework, including the achievement of common goals by two or more organizations and a commitment to: "a definition of mutual relationships and goals; a jointly developed

structure and shared responsibility; mutual authority and accountability for success; and sharing of resources and rewards" (p. 7).

An example of the collaborative relationship between Rogers Elementary and the Believe in Me program includes the achievement of mutual goals, such as providing experiences for children to develop self-esteem, leadership skills, self-discipline, and responsibility to enable them to succeed in the school and community setting. Another example is in the sharing of resources. The Believe in Me organization provided the program and Rogers Elementary provided the space and children. Together they created the environment, climate, and opportunity for children to succeed in a way that they would *not have been able to do as single entities* -- another key element to a collaborative relationship (Kagan, 1991).

The Believe in Me program would not have survived without this collaborative effort. A coordinated or cooperative effort only would not have had the same results or impact on the Rogers' children, families, and community (as presented in this next section), nor would it likely have survived the 4 years that this program has been in existence.

It appears that the strength of the interorganizational relationship -- a collaborative relationship -- between Believe and Me and Rogers Elementary was the development and recognition of a mutual relationship and goals. The common goals these two organizations shared kept the focus of the program on the children. The idea of "doing your best, trying your best, to become your best," all in the name of learning, was emphasized by both organizations. According to the Principal and other school stakeholders, having common goals with the school enabled Believe in Me to help build support from the parents, students, and the school community, which led to this community-based program

becoming a significant part of Rogers Elementary. The informants' stories of the changes in specific children (a student losing interest in gangs, a special education student's increased self esteem, another student's improved academic work, and the improvement in the student body's behavior in general) and the increase in parent participation (and a more active PTA in the community) and school spirit are evidence of Believe in Me's impact on Rogers Elementary. And, most important, Believe in Me became a fundamental part of the school, rather than just a supplemental program with little or no impact.

It was evident from the data, that the Believe in Me organization and Rogers Elementary worked together -- sharing responsibility for various aspects of the program. One example was the willingness to adapt the program to meet Rogers' year-round schedule by arranging missed-practice make-ups (due to the four-week intersession break in March) in April.

Mutual authority was also apparent. The whole school was strongly involved in annual orientations, the principal shared decision making, and the ISC acted as a linking agent between the two organizations. Success was illustrated by the noted improvement of the Rogers children in moving from, initially, one of the worst-performing schools in the program to one of the best, with a featured solo performance during the end-of-the-year production.

The school and Believe in Me continued to improve their jointly developed structure and maintained ongoing weekly communication. The Assistant Principal described this joint structure between Rogers Elementary and the Believe in Me organization as

> a collaborative or partnership -- they come up with the ideas and we [the schools] can give input as to how or what could make it better -- a very

> workable relationship. They are very consistent -- dependable. They will listen to us every year, they build on our suggestions. They listened to our complaints and suggestions [from previous years] and last year was a very workable situation and I think this year is even to be better.

This collaborative relationship did not develop automatically, and it took time to nurture. An example was provided of a conflict over authority and responsibility between the school and the Believe in Me organization. According to the ISC, "Believe in Me is very [tolerant], more so than the school." During one instance, when a child was in a serious fight during school, the ISC thought the child should be removed from the program. But the Believe in Me staff wanted to keep him in because he had worked so hard over the past year, and they wanted to let him be in the final Main Event. The ISC didn't think it was fair but went along with Believe in Me, even though she believed this action was going against what Rogers Elementary stood for.

This incident happened early in the building of the relationship between Believe in Me and the school. Since that time, these organizations have narrowed the gap between their differences and have come closer to working at the same level, mostly through the development of common goals and a focus on the children. As the Assistant principal stated, "It [the Believe in Me program] is part of our school." A summary of the nature of the interorganizational relationship is presented in table 3.

Table 3. Characteristics of the Interorganizational Relationship

Collaborative Relationship Elements	Believe in Me	Rogers Elementary
achievement of common goals and a commitment to the following elements	providing experiences for children to develop self esteem, leadership skills, self discipline, and responsibility to enable the children to succeed in the school and community setting	same same
a definition of mutual relationships and goals	each child is going to do their best, to be their best, and through that they are going to learn habits for successful and happy lives provide opportunities for students to develop self esteem and increased interest in school provide opportunities for increased parent participation	making sure that every child reaches the highest level possible in cultural awareness, technology, and self-concept same same
a jointly developed structure and shared responsibility	make student responsible for keeping up their grades develop curriculum centered on performance theme share program instructional techniques with school staff ongoing communication	support student commitment to their schooling find ways to effectively share this information with the students and staff participate in orientations and attend performances same
mutual authority and accountability for success	noted improvement of students' behavior enabled more solo performances enable school staff to be a part of the decision-making process	whole school staff involved in orientations principal and staff participate in decision making
a sharing of resources and rewards	provide opportunities for community and families to attend performances develop community partnerships	same develop more active PTA in the community

This school's collaboration with the Believe in Me program based in the community served an important purpose in addressing children's needs. This is congruent with Jehl and Kirst (1993) assertions that,

> At least two important lessons have been learned from past attempts to change the way services are provided to children. First, the durability and stability of schools make them an essential participant in these efforts. Second, schools cannot address children's issues alone; they must partner with other agencies [programs] in the community." (p. 155)

For community-based organizations to be effective in working with schools in addressing children's needs, traditional school staff roles need to change. Through the analysis of data from this study, a number of implications can be drawn regarding changing the roles and responsibilities of key school stakeholders in a collaborative relationship between a school and a community-based organization -- specifically, principals, teachers, parents, and community members (both those planning to develop a community-based program and those wanting to assess their current programs).

Principals

Although the principal's role as the instructional leader and facilitator remains important, there are a number of new roles that need to be performed and skills that need to be utilized. As far as program development and implementation, the principal has to be an active participant and make sure important information is shared with all on whom the program will have an impact. Teachers, staff, and parents have to be introduced to key staff from the community program so they can become active participants during the initial

stages of program development. The principal also has to be the overseer during the program's implementation to ensure the program staff become well connected to the day-to-day workings of the school and community.

Along with 4 characteristics the Believe in Me Director mentioned previously in the implementation phase, that is principals who (a) are open to innovative programs, (b) are willing to give parents access to schools, (c) develop real efforts to involve the community, and (d) are willing to "buck the system" and have more responsibility for success of their school, other responsibilities, according to Jehl and Kirst (1993), include:

- serving as an advocate for an expanded school role, making the case for his or her peers, communities, and parents,
- reorganizing and linking "key teachers and other staff members on campus with staff from the other program," and
- being an enabler by "promoting the involvement of other staff and community members in planning and monitoring a school-linked service effort" (p. 160).

Teachers

When working in a collaborative relationship with a community-based program, teachers also have a number of new roles and responsibilities to incorporate into their existing positions with their school and district, which is supported by Jehl and Kirst (1993) who argue, teachers "need to be actively involved in assessing the need for the program, adapting and adopting the philosophy that undergirds it, and preparing for solid working relationships among members of their same staff and with those from the program" (p. 162). Teachers at Rogers Elementary attended the weekly practice sessions

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and assisted the dance teachers with children who were having problems with various dance routines. These teachers also participated in parent meetings and semi-annual program orientations to show support for the program, answer parent questions, and provide feedback to the program staff on the program for future planning.

As Jehl and Kirst suggested, these teachers had opportunities for "lengthy discussions" in which they learned from each other. This is congruent with the assertion that, "teachers need time to think, plan, and talk with the professionals who are involved in the collaborative effort. They are likely to have many concerns as they begin this process" (Jehl & Kirst, 1993, p. 162).

Once their concerns were addressed in these discussions, teachers showed their support for the community-based program through their interactions with and encouragement of those students participating in the program, the students' parents, and staff members from the community program.

Parents

Parents, too, have important roles to play in the collaboration between community-based programs and public schools. According to S. L. Gardner (1993), the parent's role is an obvious one: "Without their support at home, the interventions [of collaborations with community-based programs] at school . . . will lack indispensable reinforcement" (p. 145). Along with their involvement and participation in meetings and program orientations, Gardner suggested that, "parents can become members of focus groups, join advisory councils, help build cultural understanding on the part of new workers, serve as paraprofessional aides . . . parents are critical partners in school-linked programs" (p. 145). This collaboration at Rogers Elementary School was no exception. Parents attended

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two parent meetings during the school year and volunteered to assist with their children's performances throughout the year and especially the year-end production. Some of their volunteer duties included helping with making costumes, providing transportation, preparation for meals, and supervision of the children during rehearsals.

Community Members

Though this study was not intended to generalize about all community-based programs, there are a number of findings community members might want to consider when developing a program or evaluating an existing community-based organization -- especially around the themes of generating an *interest* in the program, finding ways for community members and organizations to become *involved* and *support* the program, and ways to establish *commitment* to the programs goals. It appears the first step was to determine if there was an interest in the community and schools for the Believe in Me program. This interest was developed in social settings and with the help of d'Amboise's tapes and literature but there are other activities community members could use to achieve the same purpose. Another finding centered around the importance of school-wide orientations prior to the schools committing to the program. Not only were these orientations used to generate interest but to get school staff involved in the program and become supportive of the program's goals. After a school had committed to the program, orientations were done on an annual basis to keep the staff supportive of the program and to address concerns and questions about program changes or operations. Commitment to the program was accomplished through contracts listing responsibilities and roles of both organizations. One specific role was that of the in-school coordinator, but organizations could develop other types of linking agents between the two organizations. These agents enable the organizations to maintain high levels of involvement, support and commitment to the program's goals and objectives. Aside from linking agents within the organization,

forming partnerships with other organizations and programs, community representation on organizations' boards, and finding ways to get students involved in community activities are some of the other ways for community-based programs to achieve their goals. One final finding would be that of staffing and finding the "right people." What an organizations can do first is to identify the key characteristics one thinks staff people should have and what the organization can do to locate and keep these people -- usually through ongoing staff development and offering competitive benefits.

A school's collaboration with a community-based program produces opportunities that call for change in the ways a school's key stakeholders operate in their schools and their communities. Jehl and Kirst (1993) supported this idea of change. They noted that these types of interorganizational relationships change the ways

> schools and their staffs operate both internally and within their community. Education personnel must learn to work with other agencies and to expand the boundaries of their efforts on the behalf of students . . . [they] must understand the goals of education cannot be achieved without the school and other agencies doing a better job of addressing students' health and social needs. (p. 164)

The Believe in Me program is near the end of its fifth season (1995-1996). It is in the final stages of presenting its second production created and developed by the Believe in Me organization. This year, Believe in Me began a pilot program in two of its elementary schools to integrate character-based education throughout the full spectrum of elementary curriculum at the fourth-grade level (a stepping stone to a school-wide program). The goal of this program is to involve each fourth-grade student in one aspect of the program -- not only dance, but additional program aspects of art and music.

Rogers Elementary is one of these pilot sites. There have been some staff changes with the former Assistant Principal being appointed Principal last summer (after a vacancy due to the retirement of the previous principal) and the ISC position is now filled by two of the specialty area teachers (who have participated in the development of the curriculum for the fourth-grade program).

The Director of Believe in Me had some parting comments about the future direction of the program when she stated

> I think we are at a crossroads. We are going to explode or die. And this year and probably the next are really going to tell the tale. Because in the long run, whatever the grownups do, . . . it's the heart and soul and attitude of the children that will tell the tale. As they come through the Believe in Me experience, they are either going to change and it's going to hold and they are going to turn out to be different kind of people and will help [our city] . . . or they are not. In which case, we have just had a great time and spent a lot of energy. I am absolutely convinced that we are catching them at a perfect time. And so I think the Believe in Me program is going to go crazy. We just have to be careful and keep our focus on the children. And it's the children who should receive the awards. It's the children who should talk about us and what they are doing and learning (and not learning). And give them the opportunity to become a "STAR."
>
> "STAR" sounds so much like Hollywood. But "STAR" also means to "Stop" and "Think" and "Act" and "Review." That's what we are talking about when we say "STAR." To accept the responsibility for what you

decide to do. And so that's what "STAR" means to us. "STAR" may mean something different to them [the children], but they will catch on.

I think Believe in Me would go on. My concern is keeping it pure . . . because I don't want it to dissolve into a "nice try." My fight is to keep it excellent. That's very hard to do. My fight is to have these teachers, and these board members, and these staff people not to feel sorry for these children that they excuse mediocrity. I have to be careful to keep it at the highest possible place . . . the children deserve it!

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to discover those elements involved in the implementational and operational phases of the Believe in Me program operating in Rogers Elementary school. From the study of these two phases of program operations, an examination of the interorganizational relationship (IOR) between the these two organizations was conducted. An IOR was defied as "newly created organizations that are formed voluntarily by single organizations that have a common goal to achieve or a defined interdependency that leads to formal collaboration" (Intriligator, 1986). A key variable in IORs is the focus on common goals and more specifically, goals addressing the needs of students, families, and members of a certain community.

Given the emphasis of this study, an evaluation of the Believe in Me program was not conducted. Consequently, a next step could be a study on the evaluation of the program in meeting its goals and objectives. As Believe in Me is in the process of

completing its fifth season, an ample amount of data would be available for conducting such a study.

In the school district's formal evaluation of at-risk students, it was shown that none of the Believe in Me students had dropped out of school or had been retained. This study's findings also indicated a number of situations where Believe in Me students have improved their academic skills and schoolwork. But it still remains a goal of the Director to determine how to formally evaluate how behaviors in students participating in the Believe in Me program have changed. A study designed to directly determine the effects on Believe in Me students' behavior is recommended. Another study for consideration would be to determine the necessary elements of organizational design to create a program model that would successfully transfer to other areas and cities in the region -- another goal of the Director.

Studies of the processes of implementation and operation for these kinds of programs have not received much attention. Therefore, future case studies of community-based programs and their interorganizational relationship to public schools are recommended to add to the research base for practitioners and researchers in this field of study. This study could also be replicated with the use of more school sites until an extensive body of data on implementational and operational processes and the nature of interorganizational relationships with public schools was developed. Another reason for replicating this study would be to determine how the interorganizational relationship might have been affected with the changes in school staff, that is, the principal, assistant principal, and the ISC positions.

Finally, a number of lessons were generated from the data in this study . . . some lessons reinforced from past experiences and others were realized for the first time. One

set of lessons revolved around staffing issues. The idea of finding the "right" people, those who start out with high expectations for children and those with the innate characteristics of patience, understanding, and energy . . . who are able to treat children with a respect -- a respect they really feel -- rather than playing a role of how they think they should act around children. There was also the idea of conducting orientations prior to one making a commitment to an organization and to develop ongoing staff development programs to maintain quality staff members who are able to, among other things, discipline without anger.

Another set of lessons centered around children. The idea that all children share a common characteristic -- energy -- and that somehow it is going to come out and will either explode or implode, create or destroy. Believe in me uses dance as a tool to teach children habits for successful and happy lives -- habits including complete concentration, kindness, empathy and respect, teamwork, perseverance and responsibility -- are their other tools, other habits to teach? Then there is the goal of reaching all children, to have them experience success through some element of the program. How many schools have that as a goal . . . a mission? And then there is the idea that everyone has to have something that shows on the outside, that says "I'm worthwhile."

The last set of lessons revolved around program development. One lesson was not to become so specific, so focused, that one fails to seek connections or expand boundaries beyond one's immediate area or worse, to become inflexible to changing needs. To develop activities where children work hard so they are satisfied and know they have accomplished something -- obtained a level of success -- that no one can take away from them. What this results in is children who are alive, focused, and interested. The last lesson is to keep the program pure and excellent, and not to feel so sorry for children that one excuses mediocrity. As the Director stated, "One has to insist on quality and

excellence, focus on the children's energy, and give children the best that the program has to offer because they *deserve* it!"

Community involvement in public schools will continue to be a strong emphasis in one or the researcher's work, specifically the recognition of communities as valuable resources for schools.

> I'll always remember an informant's response during an interview for a past class assignment when he said, "Schools are products of their societies (communities)," and it is this idea that stays with me when thinking about what I will be doing in the future as a leader in the public school system. There is such a need to provide a variety of opportunities for students to somehow experience success in school, and I believe this to be an impossible task for schools to do alone without the involvement of community members.

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